

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Upon entry of the amendment above, claims 1-9 and 11-27 will be pending, claims 1, 7, 11, and 17 being independent.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 6, and 8 are objected to with regard to certain specified informalities.

Claims 7, 17, and 18 are allowed.

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over LACOMBE et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,257,676, hereafter "LACOMBE") in view of NAKASAKI (U.S. Patent No. 3,965,957) and SACKS (U.S. Patent No. 4,602,665).

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over LACOMBE in view of NAKASAKI and SACKS, and further in view of CHEN (U.S. Patent No. 6,145,937).

Claims 11-16, 20, and 21 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over NAKASAKI in view of SACKS.

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over NAKASAKI in view of SACKS, and further in view of CHEN.

Response to the Office Action

A. Withdrawal of Objections Regarding Informalities

Applicants have amended claims 1, 6, and 8 to adopt the suggestions of the Examiner in the objections thereto. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections is kindly requested.

B. Withdrawal of Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a)

Applicants kindly request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC §103(a) for the following reasons.

The rejection of claims 1+ is premised upon a previously imposed combination (i.e., from the prior Office action) of LACOMBE and NAKASAKI, whereby it is proposed

that it would have been obvious to have modified the flat strip 35 of LACOMBE (see Fig. 7) to assume a shape like the sealing strip 4 of NAKASAKI. In so doing, as acknowledged in the Office action (see second paragraph on page 4 thereof), even if LACOMBE were to have been modified by the teaching of NAKASAKI, the result still would not have included a pair of lips that extend laterally inward from the walls of the sealing strip (i.e., like lips 32, 33 of Applicants' Figs. 2 and 3).

In addition, the LACOMBE-with-NAKASAKI combination is then modified by SACKS, further premised upon an assertion that it would have been obvious to have added inwardly extending lips to the sealing strip of the LACOMBE-with-NAKASAKI combination.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

In addition, the rejection of claims 11+ is based upon the combination of NAKASAKI and SACKS. Although LACOMBE is not also relied upon in that ground of rejection, Applicants submit that the reliance upon SACKS is the same and Applicants' position regarding SACKS, whether used in modifying the combination of LACOMBE and NAKASAKI or in modifying NAKAKSAKI alone, would be the same.

The part of the SACKS disclosure that is relied upon relates to the "tire locking clips" 44, which are made of spring metal (column 2, lines 29-30), which include pointed teeth 54 which pierce the side of the tire to keep the tire from displacement.

The locking clips 44 of SACKS are quite different from the sealing strips of LACOMBE and NAKASAKI. The clips 44 of SACKS are small elements (see Fig. 2 of SACKS) that are positioned around the rim (see Fig. 1), whereas the sealing strips of LACOMBE and NAKASAKI are elastic bands that extend entirely around the rim; NAKASAKI explains that the diameter of the strip stretches to fit into the rim.

Applicants submit that if one skilled in the art were to have considered the teachings of SACKS, he would have more likely utilized clips 44 **in addition to** the sealing strips, rather than **in modifying** the sealing strips.

In addition, clips 44 would not even be necessary in the NAKASAKI or in the LACOMBE + NAKASAKI combination, since NAKASAKI utilizes "bead stoppers" 5 to keep the tire in place. See, e.g., column 6, lines 5-29 of NAKASKI. That is, one skilled in the art would have recognized that the function of the teeth 54 of clips 44 is already met.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants request that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Lastly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections which additionally rely upon CHEN are requested, also for the foregoing reasons.

C. New Claims

In the amendment above, new claims 22-27 have been added, all of which are dependent, directly or indirectly, upon independent claims 1 or 11.

New claim 22 depends from claim 1 and claim 23 depends from claim 11, each of which claims calling for each of the two lips of the sealing strip to consist of a single continuous lip extending around the annular strip. This contrasts with the plurality of teeth 54 of SACKS, for example.

New claim 24 depends from claim 1 and claim 23 depends from claim 11, each of which claims specify that each of the two lips comprises a synthetic rubber or thermoplastic material. This limitation contrasts with the metal teeth 54 of SACKS.

New claim 26 depends from claim 11 and recites first and second positions of the lips of the sealing strip, i.e., that with respect to a non-mounted tire and that with respect to a tire mounted on the rim. In the second position, claim 26 specifies, "each of said pair of lips of said sealing strip is flexed upwardly to be positioned between a tire bead and one of the pair of laterally opposed lips of the lateral flanges of the rim." In contrast, the teeth 54 of SACKS pierce the side of the mounted tire to keep the tire from displacement.

Lastly, new claim 27, which depends from claim 26, specifies that each of the pair of lips of the sealing strip comprises a synthetic rubber or thermoplastic material.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The grounds of objection and rejection advanced in the Office action have been addressed and are believed to be overcome. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the amendment and remarks above.


A check is attached for payment of a claim fee. No additional fee is believed to be due at this time. However, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee required for acceptance of this reply as timely and complete to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Further, although no extension of time is believed to be necessary at this time, if it were to be found that an extension of time were necessary to render this reply timely and/or complete, Applicant requests an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136(a) in the necessary increment(s) of month(s) to render this reply timely and/or complete, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any necessary extension of time fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Any comments or questions concerning this application can be directed to the undersigned at the telephone or fax number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
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The PTO did not receive the following
listed item(s) check


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